

Winkel-Blair House
Colorado-Concho Rivers Confluence Area
Farm Roads 2134 and 1929
Southwest of Leaday townsite
Voss Vicinity CO-2-3-6 (Ramp)
Concho County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3367

HABS
TEX
48-CONC.V,
4-

MEASURED DRAWINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WINKEL-BLAIR HOUSE

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

Location: Located .8 miles northeast of intersection of Farm/Ranch to Market Roads #2134 and #1929, .2 miles off #2134, 4.3 miles southwest of Leaday townsite, between Leaday townsite and the town of Concho, Concho County, State of Texas

USGS Leaday Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 14.430758.3488000

Present Owner: Flora Winkel Blair; permanent easement granted in 1988 to Colorado River Municipal Water District, Big Spring, Texas

Present Occupant: Demolished

Significance: The Winkel-Blair house is significant as an excellently preserved example of the vernacular woodframed L-shaped farm or tenant house type constructed in the region in the period 1880-1910. The site was culturally linked with the Winkel family who claimed their land in the 1850s. As members of the Fisher-Miller Company, the Winkels were among few such immigrants to attempt to see their new Concho County land grant in the early period of Indian disturbances. In another generation they would occupy the land and develop a large ranch, portions of which would continue in their ownership almost to the end of the twentieth century, making their one-family land tenure the longest in the region.

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1904. Dating is based on information supplied by the last owner, Flora Winkel Blair.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The site is located on lands which were originally part of the Fisher-Miller Grant, patented as the Friedrich Winkel Survey #2101, 17 February 1859. Unless otherwise noted, reference is to Deed volumes, Concho County Courthouse, Paint Rock.

1890 16 December 1890, L:459, Fritz Winkel to Edward Winkel

1904 16 May 1904, X:52, Edward Winkel to H. L. Winkel

1936 22 December 1936, 46:353, Mrs. Mattie Winkel to Flora Pearl [Winkel] Blair

1988 18 March 1988, 142:608, Flora Winkel Blair to Colorado River Municipal Water District
3. Original plans and construction: No original drawings have come to light; it is highly unlikely that any were ever produced for a vernacular structure of this sort. An early photograph, c1912, supplied by the last owner, Flora Winkel Blair, is an exceptionally clear image of the entrance front of the house and documents it as having survived relatively unchanged until its demolition in 1989.¹
4. Alterations and additions: The house, though deteriorated, survived relatively unaltered until its demolition in 1989. The only change seems to have been the enclosure of the southwest arm of the L-shaped porch to accommodate a new bathroom; this enclosure was made post 1912, as a c1912 photograph indicates the porch still open at that date. Essentially all original elements were in place until 1989, including the old wood sashes, doors, the original board-and-batten siding.

B. Historical Context:

For the general historical overview which places the property in the context of the development of cattle ranching at the confluence of the Colorado and Concho Rivers please see HABS No. TX-3350.

The Winkel-Blair house was constructed in the first years of the twentieth century on land that had been granted to the Winkel family as early as 1859. The Winkels were members of the well-known Fisher-Miller Company, organized to introduce immigrants from Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to the then almost unsettled lands lying between the Llano and Colorado Rivers.² The Winkels immigrated from Germany and received lands in the northernmost portion of the Fisher-Miller Crant, that is, in northern Concho County, bordering to the west on the Concho River. Indian disturbances in the region prevented their settling immediately; however, members of the family did travel to see the new land, namely Friedrich Winkel, the grantee, and his son Louis Henry Winkel, in survey parties sent out in 1847 and 1848; the Indian situation caused them to return to Fredericksburg.³ Later, in the late 1870s, Louis Henry Winkel returned with other members of the family. By the early 1880s Winkels had settled and constructed a house, outbuildings, and stone corrals southwest of the present site on that part of their lands surveyed in 1868 as the Heinrich Winkel Survey and now occupied by the Tickle Ranch (HABS No. TX-3359).⁴

That portion of the Winkel Ranch on which is sited the Winkel-Blair house may have been settled in the late nineteenth century, but the house was not constructed until 1904, presumably by H. L. Winkel, who received through inheritance the title to the land in that year.⁵ The house was occupied by two generations of Winkels, and it and the land continued in their ownership until 1988 when the last owner, Flora Winkel Blair, granted permanent easement to the Colorado River Municipal Water District. Thus this title was held by members of the Winkel family from 1859 to 1989, the longest family land tenure in this vicinity.

In 1979 the Texas Water Commission granted permission to the Colorado River Municipal Water District, an entity based in Big Spring, to construct a large dam on the Colorado River. The site chosen was a location several miles downstream from Leaday, sixteen miles below the confluence of the Colorado and Concho Rivers. Early in the planning stages, a program was developed to address

environmental concerns, including the impact of the proposed flood area on prehistoric and historic cultural resources. In 1980-1981 a survey of historic cultural resources was conducted by Freeman and Freeman under contract to Espey, Huston and Associates, a firm of Austin environmental consultants. Subsequently a number of other studies and amplifications of previous studies have been conducted. In early 1988 an Albuquerque, New Mexico, firm of environmental scientists, Mariah Associates, Inc., began further assessment of the area of the flood plain, including various archaeological investigations and assessments. Mariah has also acted in the role of coordinator of related projects, including this project: the recordation of nineteen endangered historic sites in the confluence area for the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record. The sites were selected from a list compiled under the guidance of the Texas Historical Commission.

Construction was finished on the dam in the late summer of 1989. Called the Stacy Dam and Reservoir, the project will inundate approximately 19,200 acres, and the threat of inundation of the Winkel-Blair house is possible in the near future.

The house itself was demolished in June, 1989, a few days before the arrival of the HABS documentation team.

PART III. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Winkel-Blair house was a small one-story L-shaped house of a plan type and constructed of materials, woodframe with board-and-batten siding, typical for the region in the period 1880-1910. It is representative of the second or even third phase housing type constructed in the towns and on the ranches in the vicinity of the confluence of the Concho and Colorado Rivers: an expedient, inexpensive house type based on any number of catalog plans of the period for small workers' housing. The type was also frequently built on the small tenant farms established nearby on the large Day-Padgitt and Day-Miller Ranches across the Colorado River to the northeast in Coleman County (HABS No.

TX-3363). These tenant houses were being put up in exactly the same years as the Winkel-Blair house, as were a number of houses in the little new market town of Leaday (HABS No. TX-3362). The Winkel house was very simply and inexpensively constructed, thin-walled with little or no insulation factor. Naturally, there were no decorations or embellishments of any sort.

2. Condition of the fabric: The structure had deteriorated a great deal before its final destruction in 1989. The very sparse, lightweight structural lumber was in bad condition, the wall siding split, windows and doors in bad condition. It seems never to have been painted: the c1912 photograph describes an unpainted building, and surviving materials left on the site during the measurement and photographic survey verify this.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The one-story frame house is L-shaped in form, the width of each arm approximately 14 feet. Its overall length is approximately 42 feet, and the total width of the west face is approximately 28 feet. The L-configuration encompasses a south porch approximately 7 feet wide and 20 feet long.
2. Foundations, structural systems and wall construction: Construction was light-weight wood plates laid on very shallow rough stone footings, merely stacked small pieces of limestone. Essentially, there was no frame: the wall deck formed the structure: vertical boards, 1-inch by 12-inches, were butted together and nailed to the plates, the exterior joints covered by narrow 3-inch batten strips. There was no internal wood sheathing or any means taken whatsoever for insulation. The walls were only one-board thick, the joints sealed somewhat on the exterior by the batten strips and on the interior sealed by wallpaper.
3. Porch: The long south porch was approximately 7 feet wide, following the L-configuration of this face of the house. At some date the southwest end of the porch was enclosed as a bathroom. No porch posts survived the demolition, but the c1912 photograph indicates slender wood posts, probably 4-

inch-square. When the bathroom enclosure was made, this portion of the porch retained its old wood flooring or decking; the remainder of the porch was taken up at some date and replaced by a concrete slab.

4. Chimneys: No chimneystacks or chimney footings survived the demolition, but the c1912 photograph indicates a little brick stove stack rising through the gable over the southwest projecting room.
5. Openings: Doorways, doors, and windows: Following the 1989 demolition, only one door remained on the site; it was of the five stacked panels type. The south porch wall face of the house remained standing; the sashes and frames had been removed from the wall, but the opening sizes and information from the c1912 photograph seem to indicate wood sashes of the 4-over-4 type pane pattern.
6. Roof: The roof of the two arms of the L were gabled, pitched to the same height. The porch roof was a shed roof butting into the walls a few inches below the eaves of the main roof. The roofs were originally covered with wood shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The house faced south with a row of three rooms butted together on an east-west axis; a fourth room projected south or forward from the west forming the L-configuration. The fourth, or southwest projecting room, and all other rooms except the northwest room, had doors opening to the south porch. Probably all the rooms functioned as sleeping rooms. A logical place for the cookstove would have been in the southwest room; the 1912 photograph indicates a little brick stove chimneystack rising from this room, and it did have two exterior doors, one to the main porch and one to a west stoop.
2. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls had no sheathing or plaster; they were always wallpapered, the paper hung directly on the interior face of the board siding. One remaining fragment of ceiling consists of grooved (not beaded) boarding.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house was situated on a high flat plain above the Concho River to the northwest. It faced south to the prevailing breeze and toward its entrance drive. At the present time there is a dense growth of mesquite trees across the entire site of the house and its small compound of outbuildings.
2. Outbuildings: In the northwest corner of a small wire-fenced compound is a woodframe shed, approximately 20 feet by 30 feet, of the same construction as the house and covered by a corrugated metal roofing. Beyond the compound to the west of the house approximately 100 feet is a crumbling stone storm cellar. Northeast of the house lot approximately 180 feet is a second woodframe shed, approximately 12 feet by 24 feet.
3. Landscaping, enclosures: The little compound of house and outbuilding was enclosed with fencing of wood posts and chickenwire.

Prepared by:
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September 1989

PART IV. ENDNOTES

1. A photocopy of this important early photograph, furnished by Mrs. Flora Blair, is attached.
2. For a concise discussion of the Fisher-Miller Colony, see Walter Prescott Webb and H. Bailey Carroll, eds., The Handbook of Texas, vol. I (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), 601. See also Martha Doty Freeman and Joe C. Freeman, A Cultural Resource Inventory of the Proposed Stacy Reservoir: Concho, Coleman and Runnels Counties, Texas, vol. II: Historical Cultural Resources, report prepared for the Colorado river Municipal Water District by Espey, Huston, and Associates, Inc., Engineering and Environmental Consultants (Austin, Texas, March 1981), 3-1 through 3-3.
3. Donald R. Abbe and Joseph E. King, "A Preliminary Report: Historical Resources within the Stacy Dam Project Area," draft of a report prepared for the Colorado River Municipal Water District by Mariah Associates, Inc., Environmental Consultants (Lubbock, Texas, June 1989), 55 and 89.
4. Freeman, 5-8.
5. Ibid., 7-3 information supplied by last owner, Flora Winkel Blair.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored by Mariah Associates, Inc., archaeologists; recorded under the direction of Greg Kendrick, HABS regional coordinator, Denver. The project was completed during the summer of 1989 at the project field office at Houston and College Station, Texas. Project supervisor was Graham B. Luhn, A.I.A., architect; project architectural historian was Gus Hamblett, Texas A&M University; intern architects were Debbie Fernandez and Paul Neidinger; student architects were Brian Dougan, Robert Holton, Janna Johnson, Wayne Jones, and Pat Sparks, Texas A&M University; project photographer was Paul Neidinger, photographic processing by Laura McFarlane.

